

*Multi-Species Avian Ecology Workshop
March 17-18 2003 Key Largo Florida*



On March 17-18, 2003 Sustainable Ecosystems Institute (SEI), at the request of the Department of the Interior and Task Force, convened a panel of experts to help advance the science and restoration effort for the Florida Everglades. This workshop focused on developing a multi-species approach that considered the biology of the snail kite, the roseate spoonbill, the Cape Sable seaside sparrow, and the wood stork. Each of these species is an indicator of different habitats and different ecological processes. The

roseate spoonbill is listed by the state as a species of special concern and the other three species are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act.

The goal of the effort is to develop a common understanding of the science and to make that science available to all parties including decision makers. To meet these goals SEI asked the panel of experts to evaluate and consider the technical information regarding the four avian species. At this, the first of two workshops, panelists and the audience heard presentations from thirty-two speakers, and the science was openly debated in a facilitated forum. Presenters and panelists were charged with focusing on the science and asked to refrain from commenting on management decisions.

The workshop opened with an overview of the goals and a presentation on the multi-species concept by Deborah Brosnan (SEI). She discussed some of the issues central to this concept including knowledge and uncertainty around individual species, potential tradeoffs among species, and resilience and risk in the transition to full restoration. Scientists, the Miccosukee Tribe, and the Corps of Engineers then provided a natural, cultural, and hydrological overview of the ecosystem. This was followed by decision makers articulating the type of information that they need from scientists (Dept. of Interior, Miccosukee Tribe, Corps of Engineers, State Fish and Wildlife Commission and others were represented). The remainder of the two days was devoted to technical presentations by scientists on the individual species and on multi-species issues. A vigorous panelists-presenters question and answer period was held at the end of each session, and the audience was given the opportunity to participate. A two-hour discussion wrapped up the workshop. Steven Courtney (SEI) facilitated the presentations and the scientific discussions. The entire workshop was broadcast on live web cast via the Task Force website



More information, including a full agenda, details on panelists and presenters is available on the Task Force (www.sfrestore.org) and SEI (www.sei.org) websites. A full transcript and presentations will be available on these websites. Additionally, a CD of the presentations will be made available. The panel will write a short synthesis and present their findings at the next Task Force meeting. Check the websites and/or contact the Task Force or SEI for date and details.